CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4, 8-10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 as set out below:

1 (currently amended). An electronic document management system for verifying the contents of an electronic document exchanged through a network, said contents defining said electronic document and comprising a predetermined electronic form template and variable data input by a user into said predetermined electronic form template, said system comprising:

(a)   at least one data storage means ~~for storing said user-input variable data and said template~~;

(b)   a data capturing component for capturing and validating said user-input variable data~~;~~ and, thereafter, forwarding said validated user-input variable data to said storage means for storage thereby;

(c)   a document digest generator for generating a unique document digest from said stored validated user-input variable data and said template defining said electronic document by applying a secure algorithm thereto, whereby said document digest is uniquely associated with said defined electronic document, and forwarding said document digest to said storage means for storage in association with said defined electronic document;

(d)   a barcode generator for generating for each page of said electronic document a unique barcode associated with that ~~specific~~ page, based on paging details identifying ~~said~~ that page and said document digest, wherein mulitiple said unique barcodes are generated where said electronic document comprises multiple pages, with one unique barcode being generated for and associated with each page of said mulitple pages;

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(e)   a document forwarding component for forwarding said defined electronic document
        with ~~each~~ said unique <u>barcodes</u> ~~barcode~~ added to said <u>pages</u> ~~specific page~~ of said
        electronic document associated therewith for use by a user;

(f)   a document receiving component for receiving from a user a signed electronic
        document comprising variable data and a barcode for each page of said document;
        and,

(g)   a barcode verification component for determining the validity of each said barcode
        of said received electronic document wherein said document digest component of
        said barcode is compared to said stored document digest associated with said
        defined electronic document.

2 (currently further amended). An electronic document management system according to
claim 1 wherein a unique document number is generated for said defined electronic
document, said <u>unique</u> document number is stored <u>in said storage means in association
with said defined electronic document</u> ~~with said captured data~~ and said <u>bases for
generating said</u> barcodes ~~are generated from~~ <u>include</u> said ~~document digest and said~~
<u>unique</u> document number.

3 (previously cancelled).

4 (currently further amended). An electronic document management system according to
claim 2 wherein a unique document revision number is generated for said defined
electronic document, said <u>unique</u> document revision number is stored <u>in said storage
means in association with said defined electronic document</u> ~~with said captured data~~ and
said <u>bases for generating said</u> barcodes ~~are generated from~~ <u>include</u> said ~~document digest,
said document number and said~~ <u>unique document</u> revision number.

5 (previously cancelled).

6 (previously amended). An electronic document management system according to claim 4 and further comprising a document image generator for generating an electronic image of said barcoded defined electronic document, wherein said document forwarding component forwards said electronic image.

7 (original). An electronic document management system according to claim 6 wherein said received electronic document has been hand-signed and faxed by said user.

8 (currently amended). An electronic document management system according to claim 6 and further comprising a digital exchange key generator for generating a unique digital exchange key associated with said defined electronic document, said generated unique digital exchange key being generated by applying said another secure algorithm to said electronic image, and forwarding said digital exchange key for storage.

9 (currently amended). An electronic document management system according to claim 8 wherein said electronic document received by said document receiving component comprises a digital signature and said system further comprises a digital signature authentication component for authenticating said digital signature and a digital exchange key verification component for determining the validity of said received electronic document, wherein said digital exchange key verification component determines a digital exchange key by applying said other secure algorithm to said received electronic document and comparing said determined digital exchange key to said stored unique digital exchange key associated with said defined electronic document.

10 (currently further amended). A method for managing and verifying the contents of an electronic document exchanged through a network said contents defining said electronic document and comprising a predetermined electronic form template and variable data input by a user into said predetermined electronic form template, said method comprising:

(a)   storing said user-input variable data and said template;

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(b)(a)   capturing and validating said user-input variable data and, thereafter, storing forwarding said validated user-input variable data for storage;

(c)(b)   generating a unique document digest from said stored validated user-input variable data and said template defining said electronic document by applying a secure algorithm thereto whereby said document digest is uniquely associated with said defined electronic document, and forwarding said document digest for storage in association with said defined electronic document;

(d)(c)   generating for each page of said electronic document a unique barcode associated with that specific page, based on paging details identifying that said page and said document digest, whereby mulitple said unique barcodes are generated where said electronic document comprises multiple pages, with one unique barcode being generated for and associated with each page of said mulitple pages;

(e)(d)   forwarding said defined electronic document with each said unique barcode added to said specific page of said electronic document associated therewith for use by a user;

(f)(e)   receiving from a user a signed electronic document comprising variable data and a barcode for each page of said document; and,

(h)(f)   determining the validity of each said barcode of a document received by said document receiving component wherein said document digest component of said barcode is compared to said stored document digest associated with said defined electronic document.

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11 (previously cancelled).

12 (currently further amended). A method according to claim 10 ~~11~~ and further comprising generating a unique document number for said defined electronic document and ~~forwarding~~ storing said unique document number in association with said defined electronic document ~~for storage with said captured data~~, whereby said bases for generating said barcodes include ~~are generated from~~ said ~~document digest and said~~ unique document number.

13 (currently further amended). A method according to claim 12 and further comprising generating a unique document revision number for said defined electronic document and ~~forwarding~~ storing said unique document revision number in association with said defined electronic document ~~for storage with said captured data~~, whereby said bases for generating said barcodes include ~~are generated from said document digest, said document number and~~ said unique document revision number.

14 (previously cancelled).

15 (previously amended). A method according to claim 13 and further comprising generating an electronic image of said barcoded defined electronic document and forwarding said image for use by a user.

16 (currently amended). A method according to claim 15 and further comprising generating a unique digital exchange key associated with said defined electronic document by applying ~~said~~ another secure algorithm to said electronic image and forwarding said digital exchange key for storage.

17 (currently amended). A method according to claim 16 whereby said electronic document received by said document receiving component comprises a digital signature, said method further comprising:

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(a)   authenticating said digital signature; and,

(b)   determining the validity of said received electronic document by applying said
        <u>other</u> secure algorithm to said received electronic document and comparing
        the resulting determined digital exchange key to said stored unique digital
        exchange key associated with said defined electronic document.

18 (original). A method according to claim 15 whereby said received electronic document
has been hand-signed and faxed by said user.